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REPORT (PART II)

ON

NATIVE-OWNED ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS IN BENGAL

FOR THE

Week ending Saturday, 25th October 1902.

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II.—HOME ADMINISTRATION.

(a)—Police.

1450. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, referring to the tour programme of the Police Commission, finds that dates have been fixed for sittings in Calcutta when most of the leading men are away enjoying their holidays. This will prevent many independent witnesses from being examined. The journal wishes the President to explain the method that will be adopted for obtaining evidence. Will written statements be accepted without cross-examination, or will evidence be collected on certain fixed points on which questions will be asked?

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
16th Oct. 1902.

1451. The same journal makes the following remarks on the communication from the Bengal Government that persons wishing to give evidence before the Police Commission should address the Secretary to the Commission, so as to reach him not later than the 24th October:—

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
17th Oct. 1902.

But most of our men who are competent to represent the popular side of the question, are just now away. It will not therefore be possible for them to send up their names within the prescribed time, for many of them are not likely to return to town before the 17th November or know anything about the sittings of the Commission. Thus, the chances are that while the Commission sits here day after day, no one will come forward to get himself examined. And the fear we expressed yesterday, namely, that very little evidence on behalf of the people would be recorded, is likely to be realised. Information on some other points is urgently required, and we hope the Bengal Government will be good enough to furnish the public with it. For instance, has the Commission framed any questions upon which evidence is to be taken? If so, where are these questions to be had? Then, will written statements, without cross-examination, be accepted?

1452. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* disapproves of the reform "quietly" introduced by the Government of the United Provinces, by which criminal charges against Police officers are not to be heard by Subordinate Magistrates, but should be transferred to the file of the District Magistrate or an experienced Magistrate.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
17th Oct. 1902.

A point for the consideration of the Police Commission.

As the head of the District Police, the District Magistrate is not, in the *Patrika's* opinion, the proper person to try a Police officer, or the Deputy Magistrate either, for the matter of that. "For a subordinate Magistrate cannot always dispose of a case in which a Police officer is implicated according to his own light without incurring the displeasure of the Police Superintendent and the District Magistrate. A reform in this direction is, therefore, very much needed; and we hope the matter will engage the serious attention of the Police Commission. What, we think, ought to be done is to make a provision to the effect that all charges of a serious nature against Police officers ought to be committed to the Sessions for trial. A Sessions Judge has nothing to do with the police, and he is thus in a better position than a District Magistrate to try such cases."

1453. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, comparing the *panchayat* system which The *panchayat* and police systems. obtained in pre-British days and the existing police system, finds—

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
18th Oct. 1902.

"The *panchayat* system that obtained before is very much improvable no doubt, but the system which obtains now has very few merits to recommend it.

It has created a large and unnecessary number of berths at the cost of the people, and has thus proved a severe burden upon them.

It has reduced law Courts into gaming-houses, and enabled the strong to prey upon the weak.

It is increasing crime; it has introduced internecine and interminable feuds in a peaceful society, and demoralized the gentlest and the most spiritual people in the world.

It has made the British Government exceedingly unpopular. It has taken manliness out of the people and reduced them to the condition of semi-slaves."

(b)—Working of the Courts.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
19th Oct. 1902.

1454. Referring to the acquittal of Mr. Puce, Deputy Examiner of Accounts, Oudh and Rohilkund Railway, of the charge brought against him by one Mrs. Tomsett

A case in Shahajehanpur. of attempting to outrage her modesty in a railway carriage, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* remarks:—

May we enquire why was not this European lady put on her trial under section 211, Indian Penal Code? This ought to have been done for three reasons: one is, that such a procedure would have given Mrs. Tomsett another opportunity to prove her allegations; and the other is, if she had brought the charge for the purpose of blackmailing Mr. Puce, she ought to have been punished for the protection of railway passengers; and thirdly, European ladies of the type of Mrs. Tomsett would not have ventured to similarly blackmail gentlemen.

HINDOO PATRIOT,
18th Oct. 1902.

1455. The *Hindoo Patriot* expresses the opinion that in the Tomsett-Pruse outrage case in Shahajahanpur, a grave miscarriage of justice has occurred, and the matter

Ibid. cannot possibly be allowed to rest where the Magistrate's judgment leaves it. Mrs. Tomsett's prosecution is imperatively necessary and is the only course left.

It adds:—We desire to draw public attention to this case in a special and direct manner, because it shows how unprotected and unescorted female passengers are liable to molestation and outrage, and because the common precautions of furnishing appliances for raising the alarm and so forth were culpably neglected. Outrages on females passengers on the railways by railway people, as well as others, have become notoriously common of late, and Europeans and natives are alike subject to such chance and risk. If a European lady has been molested and is to be unavenged, her sisters, European or native, will never be safe, and measures must be devised, and if her story be false and she be a blackmailer, her career and the career of such as she should be ruthlessly stopped, as Mrs. Leary's has been in Burma.

HINDOO PATRIOT,
20th Oct. 1902.

1456. After making extensive private enquiries for itself, the *Hindoo Patriot* finds that Maulvi Bazlul Karim, the Sub-divisional Officer of Sealdah, has conducted himself in a manner which, to put it in the mildest

form possible, is simply disgraceful, and that he has proved himself absolutely unfit for the position he holds in the Service. A transfer of the Maulvi to some out-of-the-way place might for the present have the effect of quieting the public excitement which his conduct has given rise to. It is the least that the Government could under the circumstances do in justice to the people, the Service, and the Maulvi himself. It then comments on the Maulvi's treatment of prominent members of the Bar and of the mukhtears who have conducted cases before him. Many of the latter have ceased in consequence to appear in the Maulvi's Court.

(d)—Education.

BENGALIEE,
14th Oct. 1902.

1457. The *Bengalee* regards the letter published in the *Times* by a correspondent from India, supporting the report of the Universities Commission, as an official vindication of the report, and says that a more feeble defence has never been put forward in any public print regarding a great public document. All that the correspondent says about the cheap degrees of the Calcutta University, and the scandals resulting from the trial of placing Universities on a more or less independent footing, are condemned as false and malicious calumny, scattered by unscrupulous men to bolster up a bad cause.

(e)—Local Self-Government and Municipal Administration.

BENGALIEE,
16th Oct. 1902.

1458. Referring to Mr. Bertram's letter to the Chamber of Commerce, recounting the achievements of the new Corporation, the *Bengalee* says it admires it as a clever piece of special pleading, as the story of the lion painted by himself. It cannot join in Mr. Bertram's praise of the work of road repairs or conservancy, as in the native quarter of the town both departments have been neglected and uncared for.

1459. The *Bengalee*, reverting to this subject, writes as follows:—

Mr. Bertram on the Calcutta Municipality.

One of the most important features of the work of the Corporation, for which credit is taken by Mr. Bertram, is the further decentralization of its operations by the division of the town into four districts. It is a departure with which we are in great sympathy. We trust it is the first notable step in a reform which will represent the future government of Calcutta.

The journal gives the credit of the conception to the old Corporation,—to Mr. Hughes, the late Engineer,—but says that the measure was carried into effect by the doggedness and tact of Mr. Greer.

It, however, does not think that the facts justify Mr. Bertram in singing the praises of such municipal achievements as the transfer of the Loan Department to the Bank of Bengal, the appointment of a special Municipal Magistrate, and the new Municipal Office.

BENGALÉE,
18th Oct. 1902.

(g)—*Railways and communications, including canals and irrigation.*

1460. The *Bengalee* appeals to the Agent, East Indian Railway, to rise superior to all conditions of race, and order the trial of the guard and driver, whom the Subdivisional Officer of Govindpur found equally responsible as the relieving station-master for the collision that occurred at Kalubathan.

The Kalubathan railway collision case.

The sentence of six months' rigorous imprisonment passed on the station-master has staggered the *Bengalee* as being quite out of proportion to the man's offence.

BENGALÉE,
14th Oct. 1902.

1461. The *Hindoo Patriot* complains of the train service on the Bengal-Nagpur Railway for the first four days of the pujas. There was a deficiency of intermediate and third class compartments, and passengers were put to serious inconvenience. It also appeals to the Railway authorities to remove the grievance that the want of a platform at such an important junction station as Kolaghat inflicts on the travelling public, and also asks that a new line be opened from Kolaghat to Ghatal, as the steamer at the former station which takes passengers to Ghatal never reaches its destination in time owing to the difficulty of navigating the river.

Bengal-Nagpur Railway grievances.

HINDOO PATRIOT,
18th Oct. 1902.

(h)—*General.*

1462. The decision of the Prime Minister not to give two days to the discussion of the Indian Budget will, says the *Bengalee*, be received with no little disappointment in this country.

The Indian Budget Debate in Parliament.

But it says the discussion of the Indian Budget has always been a solemn farce, and no good ever came out of it. "We do not think India would lose much if it were altogether dispensed with, as being unnecessary and useless. There is, however, one consolation which even the Prime Minister is not likely to deprive us of. The next Indian financial statement will be the last to be presented by Lord George Hamilton."

BENGALÉE,
14th Oct. 1902.

1463. Referring to the agitation in the *Englishman* to obtain the abolition of the income-tax, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* says:—
In a future issue we intend showing that the income-tax, with some modifications, is the best in India, and that the Government will commit a great blunder if it is ever led to abolish it. We ourselves have to pay a heavy amount, but we do not grudge it, because the tax is just and equitable in principle. It exempts the poor and touches the pockets of the well-to-do. If all incomes under Rs. 1,200 were exempted from the tax and if the present method of collecting it were replaced by a better one, the impost would then be a perfect one.

The income-tax.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
18th Oct. 1902.

VI.—MISCELLANEOUS.

1464. The *Bengalee* characterises Miss Cornelia Sorabji's movement to provide female legal aid for *pardamashin* ladies of India as quixotic and unworthy of attention, and one which will end in smoke.

Female legal aid for the *pardamashin*.

BENGALÉE,
18th Oct. 1902.

BENGALIEE,
18th Oct. 1902.

1465. Answering the article in the *Hindu* on this subject, the *Bengalee* says that, although it would be a good thing if the Congress could be held this year in or near Delhi, it is not practicable.

But though some may regret that the Congress is not held there, all true friends of India will, the journal hopes, combine to make the Congress of Ahmedabad the success that it ought to be.

INDIAN MIRROR,
18th Oct. 1902.

1466. The *Indian Mirror* hails the movement by the Christians of Calcutta to start a crematorium as not only removing certain unreasonable religious prejudices, but also as a sanitary movement which is bound to promote the healthiness of Calcutta. "In this connection, we may as well refer once again to the necessity of rigorous, but not tyrannical control, by the Municipality and the Police, of the Hindu burning ghats along the river banks. It is time that the scandal of half-consumed bodies being thrown into the sacred waters ceased. The licenses of the fuel contractors likewise need to be checked. We, Hindus, glibly talk of our sacred funeral rites—do we observe them?"

OFFICE OF THE INSPR.-GENERAL
OF POLICE, L. P.,

WRITER'S BUILDING,

The 25th October 1902.

H. B. ST. LEGER,

Asst. to the Insp.-General of Police, L. P.